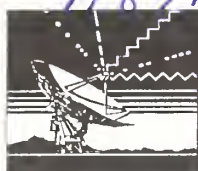


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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1900

Letter No. 2692

December 16, 1994

TOP USDA POSTS ANNOUNCED -- Three key officials for USDA were announced (December 8) by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. Those named are Floyd Horn, Acting Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics; Karl Stauber, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics; and Grant Buntrock, Acting Administrator of the Consolidated Farm Services Agency. Espy said, "These individuals bring talent and valuable experience to these key posts. They have proven to be 'Team USDA' players and I am sure they will add much to reinventing USDA as an agency more responsive to its customers." **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

SAVINGS THROUGH REORGANIZATION -- A proposal to reinvent both USDA's Forest Service (FS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was announced (December 6) by James R. Lyons, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment which should save \$75 million. The proposal calls for the NRCS to cut headquarters full-time staff by 51 percent and to co-locate field offices with USDA's new Farm Service Agency. FS anticipates reducing headquarters staff by 10 to 20 percent, and downsizing its regional structure from nine to seven offices. Lyons said, "One of the primary goals of reinvention and reorganization of the Natural Resources and Environment agencies is to continue to provide quality customer service and save taxpayers money." **Contact: Jim Loftus (202) 720-4623.**

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED POTATO -- USDA is asking the public for comments on a petition for a determination of non-regulated status for potatoes that are genetically engineered for resistance to the Colorado potato beetle. The Monsanto Company has asked to produce its genetically engineered potato without securing further USDA permits or acknowledged notifications. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) regulates the potato because it contains gene sequences derived from plant pathogenic sources. The potato was field tested at 34 locations under nine USDA permits issued between 1991 and 1993. APHIS reviewers determined that the vectors and other elements used did not present a plant pest risk. **Contact: Cynthia A. Eck (301) 436-5931.**

MILK PRICING CHANGES -- USDA will change how the Class II milk price is calculated each month under all federal milk marketing orders. The new method will use the Minnesota-Wisconsin (M-W) price for the second preceding month and add a fixed differential of 30 cents. This price will be announced at the same time as the Class I milk price. Pat Jensen, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, says, "Adoption of this pricing formula will coordinate the value of producer milk used in the manufacture of Class II dairy products with higher Class I milk prices." About 10 percent of the nation's milk production is used to manufacture Class II dairy products. USDA is also recommending multiple component pricing for milk under the Southern Michigan federal milk order. The rule would allow for pricing milk based on three components: protein, butterfat and a "fluid carrier" residual. Shipping percentages would be amended and the allowable assessments would be increased. Comments will be accepted until January 13. **Contact: Gil High (202) 720-8998.**

DISTRICT COURT UPHOLDS USDA -- A U.S. District Court has upheld USDA's methods of enforcing international trade provisions protecting endangered plant species from being illegally collected from the wild for importation into the United States. The judgment also upheld the legal authority of USDA to seize shipments of plants determined to have been collected in the wild or that lack accurate information on accompanying export permits from signatory countries of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. **Contact Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898.**

AND THE AWARD GOES TO "HEROES OF REINVENTION" -- A representative sample of local "heroes" at USDA who have enacted President Bill Clinton's goal of making a government that works better and costs less have been given the Hammer Award. The Hammer Award recognizes reinvention efforts that cut red tape, streamline programs, empower front line employees, cut wasteful spending and improve customer service. The award was handed out at an interagency event sponsored by the Washington area Working Group for Reinvention and National Performance Review. Lonnie King, the Acting Administrator for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said, "Employees in APHIS's Simplifying Rulemaking Reinvention Lab have shown great initiative in meeting goals of the National Performance Review by reinventing the review and clearance procedures that apply to the development of APHIS rules." **Contact: Margaret Webb (301) 436-7799.**

IT CAN KEEP GROWING AND GROWING -- The Department of Agriculture will no longer regulate a genetically engineered yellow crookneck squash. Known as ZW-20, the squash was developed to resist infection from zucchini yellow mosaic virus and watermelon mosaic virus two, which frequently damage squashes. These plants don't present a plant risk and are as safe as other squash varieties, according to John Payne, the Acting Director of Biotechnology, Biologics and Environmental Protection for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. He says in the past five years of evaluation in a laboratory, greenhouses and field experiments, it was confirmed that the ZW-20 squash exhibits agronomic characteristics similar to those of other squash. **Contact: Cynthia A. Eck (301) 436-5931.**

SEEDS OF CHANGE -- The Department of Agriculture has amended the Federal Seed Act regulations to eliminate potential conflict between state and federal regulations that could inhibit the movement of seed. The amendments include adding methods to test coated seeds, changing names of some seeds to names more widely accepted, adding several agricultural and vegetable seeds to those subject to the Federal Seed Act, and updating the standards for certifying seeds. The Federal Seed Act is a truth-in-labeling law to protect farmers and consumers. **Contact: Gil High (202) 720-8998.**

ECONOMIC FORUM -- USDA will hold an Economic Outlook Forum in Washington, D.C. on February 22 and 23, 1995 to assess farm prospects for the remainder of the decade. Long term commodity projections and debate on trends and future farm prospects will be featured. **Call (202) 720-3050.**

FAX -- You can obtain our radio and TV programming information and the **Broadcasters Letter** through your facsimile machine by calling USDA's AgNewsFax. Use the telephone connected to your FAX machine to call **(202) 690-3944**. At voice prompts press **1**, press **4**, then to receive **Broadcasters Letter**, press **9200**; radio newslines information, press **9250**; TV contents billboard, press **9260**; TV scripts, press **9270**. After all your selections, then press **#**, press **3**, and press the **start** button on your FAX machine.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1959 -- In this edition of Agriculture USA, a report on a week long tour of wetlands in the mid-west. Brenda Curtis looks at this controversial issue. (Weekly cassette - 13-1/2 minute documentary).

CONSUMER TIME # 1440 -- Christmas tree history; holiday gift plant; milder winter; car seats and child safety; gauging tobacco's economic importance. (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1950 -- Farm income; the outlook isn't good for dairy farmers; brighter export price picture; the wetlands issue; farm bill buzzwords. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, December 26, HOLIDAY; Tuesday, December 27, weekly weather and crops; Thursday, December 29, hogs and pigs; Friday, December 30, agricultural prices; Monday, January 2, HOLIDAY; Tuesday, January 3, weekly weather and crops. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carry many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on food safety tips for holiday parties and on USDA Forest Service research on turning wood and plastic into a useful material.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop conditions.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on Forest Service accessibility projects.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

*Galaxy 7, Transponder 9, Channel 9, Audio 6.2 or 6.8, Downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.
Available on Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., EDT; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., EDT.*

*Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.
Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.*

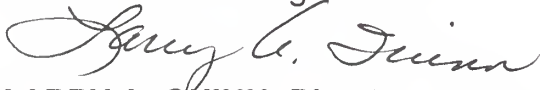
OFF MIKE

CORPORATE FARMING...is an issue on the minds of farmers, and it's been on the ballot in many Kansas communities, reports new farm director **Carolyn Kelly** (KXXX, KQLS, & KFNS, Oberlin and Colby, KS). Odor and pollution control are the primary concerns with corporate hog and dairy operations. Carolyn assumed her position a month ago when **Joe Munsell** moved over to become sales manager. She is a farmer's daughter and was raised on her family's wheat farm. Her stations serve a tri-state listening area of northwest Kansas, southwest Nebraska and eastern Colorado.

AG DAY...executive producer **Larry Lyle** died December 6 following an illness, reports **Don Greene**. Larry will be missed in the world of farm broadcasting and leaves a legacy in the continuing success of Ag Day, a daily national TV program. **Brian Conrady** has been named new executive producer.

RURAL CONCERNS RALLY...is scheduled for December 20, 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. in Sioux City, IA. **Emery Kleven** (KMNS, Sioux City, IA) says the rally sponsored by the Town and Country Alliance is expected to draw 4-5,000 farmers to discuss hog markets and related topics to help producers. Emery says producers will be invited to donate one hog each that can be offered to area food banks. He estimates that may generate 250,000 pounds of pork for charitable use, if enough participate.

LOOKING AHEAD...to 1995, **Kim Dlouhy** (WOW, Omaha, NE) reports that the Husker Feed Grains and Soybean Conference is scheduled for January 11-13 in Lincoln, NE. Kim has been active recently covering farm organization and cattlemen's meetings. She does three farm newscasts and several market updates daily, totaling about 15 reports that air from 5:50 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Kim says her station moved into new facilities last March, and they have enjoyed the transition into digital audio.



LARRY A. QUINN, Director
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